

## U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)

### PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION KEY ISSUES INFORMATION PAPER

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**SUBJECT:** *Economic Catalyst Initiative*

#### 1. **BACKGROUND:**

In 2015, GSA launched a nationwide Economic Catalyst Initiative to better align the agency's building, leasing, and relocation plans with the economic development goals of local communities, while also improving outcomes for the federal government and partner agencies and respecting local development processes.

##### a. General Background:

- GSA facilities are located in more than 2,000 urban communities nationwide. As a federal agency, GSA has the responsibility to leverage its federal real estate actions in ways that support community development goals, while also meeting client agency needs. This responsibility derives from legal mandate, including federal law and executive orders, as well as sound business practices.
- GSA utilizes Local Portfolio Planning as a key element to:
  - Examine current, local real estate market conditions and trends, GSA space inventories and current and future agency housing needs.
  - Develop strategies for housing federal agencies in a metropolitan area and describing potential alternative courses of action to meet tenant agencies space needs.

##### a. Issues:

- GSA has examples across the portfolio where it has successfully engaged with local communities to help improve the economic development of neighborhoods; however, prior to this initiative it was not enshrined in policy or consistent across the agency. The economic catalyst initiative aims to address this issue.
- The Smart Location Database is a nationwide geographic data resource for measuring location efficiency. It includes more than 90 attributes summarizing characteristics such as housing density, diversity of land use, neighborhood design, destination accessibility, transit service, employment, and demographics. The smart location index performance measure helps PBS track the effectiveness of its real estate decisions for communities.

#### 2. **SCOPE AND EFFECT:**

##### a. Impact on GSA's Customers:

- GSA continues to increase partnerships and information sharing with other Federal government agencies to maximize community benefits by using place-based initiatives data from other agencies, and by working directly with other Federal agencies at the regional and national level to amplify their existing economic development grant efforts.
- a. Impact on the Private Sector and State & Local Governments:
  - A foundational element of the economic catalyst initiative is collaboration and understanding of local communities plans for economic development and utilizing that information in GSA local portfolio plans, which help inform GSA's placement of federal entities in the short and long term.
- a. Project examples:
  - Toledo, OH
  - Blackstone, VA
  - Greenville, MS

### 3. **ACTION(S) PLANNED OR REQUIRED:**

Support local community growth and sustainable planning by continuing to train and educate PBS on economic catalyst and ensure coordination with local officials during the planning process.

- Review site selection policy and process for updates.
- Expand use of location efficiency data into occupancy agreements.
- Continue to monitor upcoming lease expirations for opportunities to relocate federal agencies to central business districts or other areas targeted for growth by local officials
- Analyze capital projects for economic catalyst and urban development opportunities; where appropriate engage with other agencies to amplify federal government efforts in communities

### 4. **KEY STAKEHOLDER INTEREST:**

As part of local portfolio planning and the economic catalyst initiative, GSA has proactively worked with other Federal agencies while increasing coordination with local governments and community leaders. These partnerships are vital to:

- Identifying potential consolidation opportunities through national real property efficiency planning.
- Identify possibilities for disposal of properties to stimulate development.
- Identifying opportunities to leverage consolidation and capital project investment funding.
- Ensuring federal buildings are transit accessible and promoting economic development, where appropriate.

- Consolidating more tenants in federal properties in communities needing economic growth.
- Creating solutions to maximize government and community benefit

**5. FISCAL YEAR 2017/2018 BUDGET IMPACT:**

N/A